

METRO

...CRIME, CITY WATCH, COURTS

ABIODUN BELLO

otuntise@yahoo.co.uk
08023938212

Murtala Ayinla and
Taiwo Jimoh

Explosion: Two killed, eight injured, 30 vehicles burnt in Lagos ...one dies in Kano

1 Two persons were killed, eight injured while 30 vehicles were burnt after a pipeline exploded yesterday at the Ijegan area of Lagos State.

2 Also, one person died while another was injured when a fuel tanker exploded in Kano State.

The Lagos explosion was caused by suspected vandals who were siphoning fuel from a breached Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) pipeline.

The explosion occurred about 3a.m., at Fire Junction in the community, while most of the residents were still asleep. The sound of the explosion generated panic, forcing many people to run out of their houses naked.

It was learnt that three weeks ago, some of vandals went to the area in about five buses to siphon fuel.

According to some residents, yesterday's explosion was caused by the vandals, who came with 10 trucks.

A source in the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) said when the vandals got to the scene they saw an anti-vandal squad, patrolling the area.

"When the vandals saw our men, they opened fire. The vandals were escorted to the pipeline points by some soldiers. The soldiers also assisted them in fighting our officers. Some of the vandals escaped with injuries. They came with 10 tankers, but left with eight. They abandoned two while trying to run away.

"We are not going to rest until we get them. We're working on intelligence gathering to arrest the vandals. What we gathered was that the vandals had an informant in the area, who usually gives them information whenever our men left the scene on patrol. But I believe we are going to get them," the source said.

A witness, who gave his name as Adeolu, said when the vandals saw the NSCDC officers, they engaged them in gun battle, which lasted for about 10 minutes.

He said: "This is not the first time we are witnessing such incident in our community. In 2008, we had a similar incident, where properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. And a lot of people lost their lives to the vandals then. We are witnessing another one now; government should do something about these vandals."

A resident, Miss Adetutu Sulaimon, said the people awoke from sleep by the explosion.

She said: "We were sleeping, we suddenly heard someone shouting, telling people to move out of their houses. Immediately, we rushed out. Some people even rushed out stark naked. There was a woman, who rushed out, carrying her three-month-old daughter. She was completely naked. It was my mother who gave her clothes to cover herself. It was a serious confusion.

"When some people were running, they fell down and sustained



A child affected by the fire

injuries. At Church Street, a family of four got trapped in their house. They were seriously burnt. They had been taken to Isolo General Hospital. The two people that died were Hausa. They were sleeping in their containers where they sell groceries and got caught in the inferno. Their remains have been deposited at the mortuary."

It was also learnt that when the vandals were escaping from the scene, they spilled fuel into the drainages, which also caught fire. The fire affected three streets, shops and goods were destroyed.

The General Manager of the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), Femi Oke-Osanyintolu, said that firefighters were battling to put out the inferno.

According to him, the toll may further rise.

He said: "Immediately we received the distress call about the fire, we moved to the scene and contained the fire to a level, but it was with the assistance of Lagos State Fire Service and other sister agencies.

"On arrival of LRT at the scene of the incident, it was gathered that some vandals were engaged in bunkering activities at Fire Junction, Ijegan, within the vicinity where an NNPC pipeline was buried. The vandals had already siphoned petrol into a 33,000-litre tanker while a second tanker of the same capacity was being loaded when security agencies suddenly intercepted the vandals.

"While trying to escape, some of the siphoned fuel spilled into the drainage and the vandals were alleged to have set the spilled fuel on fire in a bid to deter the security agencies from apprehending them. The fire eventually returned to the pipeline point where the vandals siphoned the fuel and exploded with escalating fire which led to two fatalities and over 30 vehicles burnt, eight persons were also injured."

The spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency



Local Government Primary School, Ijegan, partially burnt

(NEMA), South-West, Mr. Ibrahim Farinloye, said that immediately the incident started, NEMA informed the NNPC, who are owners of the pipeline. He noted that some of victims were affected in the inferno while trying to flee.

Some schools close to the scene of the pipeline explosion were affected. The schools are Baptists Model High School and Ijegan Comprehensive Junior High School.

Firefighters were still battling with the inferno as at 3p.m. At Irede Street, 20 shops were burnt.

Mr. Chinedu Nnaji, who sells raw food, said that he stocked his shop on Monday and the explosion occurred yesterday. Nnaji said that his newly stocked shop was razed.

He said: "The entire foodstuff I bought was inside my shop. Everything is gone. I don't know where to start from. I collected loan from bank to stock my shop. I'm in a serious problem."

But another source said that when the vandals, who had already



Scene of the explosion

siphoned 33,000 litres loaded in a tanker, were intercepted by the police, the vandals deliberately set the spilled fuel on fire in a bid to deter the security agents from

2 Meanwhile in Kano, one person died while another sustained injuries when a tanker carrying diesel exploded on Rano Road, Bunkure in Bunkure Local Government Area.

The Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the state Fire Service, Alhaji Saidu Mohammed, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Kano that the accident occurred about 8.52a.m. yesterday.

He said: "We received a distress call from one Malam Mohammed about 8.52a.m. that there was a tanker that was gutted by fire on Rano Road.

"On receiving the information, we quickly dispatched our personnel and vehicle to the scene of the incident about 9.10a.m. to rescue the victims."

Mohammed said the tanker's number plate could not be completely identified because of the fire.

The PRO attributed the accident to speed limit violation which resulted in loss of control by the driver.

He said two people were involved, one died while the other sustained injury.

Mohammed added that the victims had been handed over to officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).

The PRO gave the names of the victims as Malam Danladi (45) and Abubakar Ya'u (35).

He appealed to motorists to always obey traffic regulations so as to stay alive and minimise accidents on the road.

apprehending them.

The emergency responders and officials from the Lagos Fire Service, Lagos State Ambulance Service (LASAMBUS), NSCDC, Neighbourhood and Safety Corps, Rapid Response Squad (RRS) and others had a hectic time controlling the situation, which generated confusion.

The Head of the fire service, Mrs. Margret Adeseye, who led the fire-fighting operation, said her office received the information at about 5a.m.

Adeseye, who also introduced herself as the Acting Director of the agency, said that five fire stations were deployed at the scene to put out the fire.

She said: "I received the call at 5a.m. We have five fire stations on ground to combat the fire. Immediately I got the message I called the NNPC to shut the channels of the fire. But we were able to curtail the fire. We won't leave here until we completely put out the fire."

Assault: Adamawa senator, Abbo, visits IG, FCT Command

Emmanuel Onani
ABUJA

Senator representing Adamawa North Senatorial District, Elisha Abbo, had a session with operatives at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command Headquarters, yesterday.

The lawmaker was seen in a video

assaulting a woman at a sex toy shop in Abuja.

The video, which went viral on the social media, had attracted condemnation from individuals and groups, many of who had called for his immediate arrest and prosecution, where culpability was established.

Accordingly, the Inspector General of Police (IG), Mr. Mohammed Adamu, ordered an investigation into the ugly

incident.

It was learnt that Abbo had visited the IG at the Force Headquarters, before proceeding to the FCT Police Command, for possible interview.

It was, however, not clear when the interaction with detectives would be concluded.

The outrage generated by Abbo's violent conduct, as seen in the video, had forced him to make public apology